

January 2024

Happy New Year everyone!

We are forever grateful for the love and provision of the the Lord's people for these last 40 years with NAIM. A true testimony to the Lord's faithfulness. We have been blessed to be a part of what God is doing in the First Nations communities of Vancouver Island, and beyond.

This March, I will be retiring from NAIM. We will remain living in Campbell River with our First Nations family and community, but it is time to step back and take a breath.

Thank you! from the deepest recesses of our hearts. There really isn't a way to sum up the past 40 years of ministry. We raised our children here in the first Nations community and will remain a part of the community and nation of the Kyuquot people. We will see what God has for us this stage of our lives. I will be taking some time after retirement to process through what the Lord has for me to do here. We would appreciate your prayers as we work through what 'retirement' from ministry looks like.

We have walked alongside the Kyuquot Cheklesah nation through times of unspeakable grief and wonderful times of celebration and joy. It has shaped who we are, who our children are and who our grandchildren are becoming. As we look back over the past 40 years, we have often had conversations with our kids about the sacrifices made, and the choices we made on their behalf, that have seen our family walk through very difficult times alongside a hurting community. Brian will be 40 this year, Anna 37 and Beth 33.

Each of our children chose as young adults to get tattoos. We were not impressed ha ha ha. When we talked with each of them about why they chose those tattoos - for each, it was a statement of faith produced through grief. A statement that they knew God would always provide, comfort and sustain them. Each of the kids said 'This strange life we have led, how we grew up, white on the outside but Nuuchahnulth on the inside has shaped who we are today. We know how to comfort others, how to accept others, love and to reach out and be a blessing in Jesus' name because we watched you do it all our lives.' Wow. Didn't expect that. They have each chosen to continue to raise their kids in the Nuuchahnulth community. Potlatches are now events where we see not only our kids mask dance and participate in culture but our grandkids too. It is amazing, thrilling and joyful. This is where we were planted and this is where we stay.

These past few years since Covid began, has reshaped how ministry has been done. Who ever thought you could do counselling, and deliverance over a phone or FaceTime call. This past year, gatherings have returned to the community and it feels so good to be together both in grief and celebration. There have been many funerals - some as God called beloved elders home to himself and others due to drug overdoses in ones far too young to leave this earth. Yet we see growth and joy in our community and loved ones. God is working, God is healing and God is leading.

As we age... so have our parents. As most of you know, we lost both of our Dad's in 2019 and my Mom Freda in 2022. Kristy's Mom remained independent for a few years after Bill's passing but now has been diagnosed with dementia. She has moved into a level 1 memory care home just 15 minutes away from us. She loves getting together for family stuff and everyone there loves when the great grandkids come to visit or pick her up to go for ice cream. Most of Mom's phone conversations begin with 'Anything fun happening today?'. We are so thankful that we have her close to us as are all the kids. Whether it's a family water-balloon fight or Christmas dinner, she loves being in the middle of all the fun.



You may not all know, but Mom's life in First Nations ministry began when she was 9 years old. When NAIM (then Marine Medical Mission - founded by her father Cap Stabbert) began to minister along the North West Coast from Seattle to Juneau Alaska. This is a picture of Mom rowing some kids from an isolated community out to catch a boat to take them to summer camp. Mom was 12. She was and continues to be an amazing woman.

Thank you again from the bottom of our hearts for your many years of friendship, support and love. We pray that this year brings you closer to the Jesus we all serve and love.

With love,
Jim and Kristy

Brian, Ricci and Emma

Anna, Jesse, Eli, Vienna and
Ryder

Beth and Jed



NAIM staff and the ministries they represent are solely funded through and fully accountable to North America Indigenous Ministries.